



AZEM Adds To Its Capabilities!

Arizona Engineering and Manufacturing, Inc. (AZEM), is tucked away in a sleepy town called Benson, just 30 minutes from Tucson. A Woman-Owned Business, run by Sue DuPee, the shops supports a

number of large customers, including prime contractor Northrop Grumman as well as Ruda-Cardinal, an optical engineering and manufacturing firm.

The company is a highly specialized in products that require very tight tolerances, and are typically R&D prototypes or small quantity runs. The work of AZEM can be found in products throughout the world - sometimes out of this world - as in NASA satellites.

Owner Sue retired from the banking industry several years ago. When her step-son Curt DuPee founded AZEM in 1997, Sue was enlisted to provide financial guidance to the company. Over time, she became increasingly involved with the business, and just 3 and a half years ago, Sue bought out Curt and another partner. Sue's enthusiasm for the business



is immediately apparent when you enter the shop, and she says she loves being involved with manufacturing parts that save peoples' lives!

The company grew an astonishing 25% last year, apparently exempt from the downturn that affected most businesses. "With our growth, we needed to add to our machining capabilities", Sue said. The company already had 4 CNC mills, 3 CNC lathes, grinders, and a number of manual machines, she elaborated. "But since our customers come to us with mission critical parts needed immediately, we felt it was time to step up to a higher end



machine. As an example we had a customer that needed some parts for the main shaft on their UAV. They had a number of the UAV's grounded or "Planes on Ground (POG)", as they term it. We needed to supply them with 10 parts in 3 days, to get the Planes off the Ground. (Sue is pictured holding the part Arizona Engineering built to enable the "Planes Off the Ground".)

General Manager and key employee Steve Swanson did some extensive research before making the decision to purchase the Okuma machine. He said, "We decided on two high end machines, the Okuma and another. Both sales people took us to sites where their equipment was used exclusively. This didn't help me because they were biased to the machines they had purchased and were using. We contacted a machine shop in Texas, which we knew about from one of our employees. They had both machines, and while they were very positive about both, they told us "hands down - pick the Okuma". They elaborated that the Okuma was the best decision for the type of work we do at Arizona Engineering - prototyping and very tight tolerance work". Steve continued, "We wanted a machine with live tooling, and the feedback that we got from a number of people was that Okuma has more powerful live tooling than other high end machines."

"Jeff is the sales person from Arizona CNC who sold us the Okuma Captain L370M", Sue said. We've had a relationship with Jeff many years now, and we knew that Jeff did a really good job supporting us in the past. Arizona CNC has a dedicated service team in Arizona, and this was important to us. With other machines, you might have a service person in California, who would have to fly in if we had a down machine. Arizona CNC is close enough that they can get to us very quickly. While the machine is running like a charm, on the one instance we needed Arizona CNC onsite support, they were at our facility within an hour!"

"Jim Levesque is our applications engineer at Arizona CNC, and Steve calls him whenever he has a question. Jim is extremely knowledgeable and helpful, as is the whole team at Arizona CNC!", Sue said.

For superior quick-turn machining, contact Arizona Engineering at (520) 586-1522. You will encounter a team willing to meet your requirements, regardless of what they have to do to accomplish this. Visit their website at www.azem.us.